

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP, MARR, MPOL, NATO, NO

SUBJECT: VISIT OF NORWEGIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY SECRETARY
GENERAL STEPHANSEN

1. DIRECTOR OF NORTHERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS FUNSETH RECEIVED
STEPHANSEN APRIL 21 FOR CORDIAL TOUR D'HORIZON OF DEFENSE
ISSUES. STEPHANSEN WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DEFENSE MINISTER'S
AIDE, LT. COL. NAESS, AND DCM BARTH OF NORWEGIAN EMBASSY.
IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, STEPHANSEN MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

2. SECDEF VISIT TO NORWAY: STEPHANSEN CHARACTERIZED VISIT
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OF SECDEF BROWN TO NORWAY AS VERY SUCCESSFUL AND NECESSARY.
BECAUSE OF PRESS PUBLICATION OF US NAVY MEMORANDUM ABOUT
POSSIBLE REDUCTION OF NAVY'S CAPACITY TO FULFILL ITS MIS-
SION ON THE NORTHERN FLANK, NORWEGIANS WERE ESPECIALLY
PLEASED AND RELIEVED TO HAVE SECRETARY BROWN'S ASSURANCES
FROM US SIDE THAT US NAVY ROLE IN NORWEGIAN SEA IN TIME OF
CRISIS HAD NOT BEEN ABANDONED.

3. DEFENSE REVIEW COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS: PRAISING THE RECENTLY-COMPLETED DEFENSE REVIEW COMMISSION REPORT, STEPHANSEN SAID HEARINGS WOULD BE CONDUCTED THIS YEAR AND HE HOPED THE CABINET WOULD ACCEPT THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS. ACCORDING TO STEPHANSEN, THE REPORT WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE STORTING IN THE SPRING OF 1979. REITERATING WELL-KNOWN CONCERNS, STEPHANSEN NOTED ECONOMIC SITUATION IN NORWAY WAS NOT GOOD AND THAT GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE FORCED TO DEFER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A FEW YEARS, WITH DEFENSE SPENDING DROPPING BELOW THE 3 LEVEL. STEPHANSEN STATED THAT MINORITY VIEW EXPRESSED BY LEFT-WING MEMBER OF COMMISSION WAS A VERY POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT WAS MOST ANXIOUS THAT DIFFERING VIEWS BE REPRESENTED IN COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS. STEPHANSEN ADDED THAT THE DISSIDENT OPINION, IN HIS VIEW, WAS WEAK, POORLY ORGANIZED AND LIKELY TO REINFORCE THE MAJORITY VIEW-POINT IN THE PUBLIC MIND.

4. F-16: THE SECRETARY GENERAL VOICED COMPLETE SATISFACTION WITH THE F-16 PROGRAM. HE NOTED THAT CO-PRODUCTION OFFSET QUESTION WAS NOT FULLY SOLVED BUT STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIVELY STUDYING THE ISSUE.

5. DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH SWEDEN AND FINLAND: STEPHANSEN POINTED OUT SEMI-ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE FOUR NORDIC
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DEFENSE MINISTERS AND RELATED COOPERATION IN UN PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS. THE MEETINGS OF DEFENSE MINISTERS, WHICH HAVE BEEN GOING ON FOR SOME TIME, COVERED A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES -- NOT ONLY UN STANDBY FORCES -- ALTHOUGH WITH LITTLE PRESS ATTENTION. MANY LONGSTANDING FRIENDSHIPS EMERGED FROM THE MEETINGS FACILITATING INFORMAL CANDID EXCHANGES ON MATTERS OF CONCERN TO NORDIC SECURITY. WITH RESPECT TO SWEDEN, STEPHANSEN INDICATED THAT OFFICER EXCHANGES FOR TRAINING WERE MAINTAINED AT A RELATIVELY HIGH LEVEL ALONG WITH PERIODIC DISCUSSIONS ON LOGISTICS AND R&D FOR LOCALLY-PRODUCED MILITARY EQUIPMENT. STEPHANSEN EXPRESSED PERSONAL THOUGHT SWEDEN WOULD SUPPORT ALLIANCE POLICIES DURING PERIOD OF GENERAL ATTACK OR WAR IN NORTHERN REGION AND WOULD RESIST A SOVIET ATTACK. DEFENSE TIES WITH FINLAND WERE MUCH LOOSER AND STEPHANSEN SPECULATED THAT A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WOULD POSE PROBLEMS FOR FINLAND WITH THE USSR. COL. NAESS QUOTED THE VIEW OF "KNOWLEDGEABLE SWEDISH MILITARY OFFICER" THAT THE FINNISH ARMY OF 1939 WAS A VERY DIFFERENT AND MORE EFFECTIVE FORCE THAN THE PRESENT FINNISH ARMY. ALTHOUGH FINNISH ARMY HAD EXPANDED, A LOOK BENEATH THE SURFACE REVEALED, ACCORDING TO SWEDISH SOURCE, ABSENCE OF DETERMINATION AND FIGHT-

ING SPIRIT IN ENLISTED RANKS. MOREOVER FAILURE TO
MODERNIZE AND REPLACE OBSOLETE EQUIPMENT MUST BE ADDED TO
THE INTANGIBLE MORALE FACTOR. STEPHANSEN CONCLUDED BY
SAYING HE THOUGHT THE FINNS WOULD BE OVERRUN BY THE SOVIET
UNION IN A FEW DAYS. VANCE

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